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772 *songʷ*. If the Bella Coola were strictly logical, one should expect them to conceive the upper surface of *songʷ* as being convex. Instead, it is considered a flat surface, very similar to the earth, and no explanation is given of what fills in the spaces between the dome, concave as viewed from this world, and the upper plane which could rest only on the peak of the dome. But logical accuracy is not a Bella Coola characteristic. [811] This flat land is called *dāsonxʷdā* or *wasongʷ* *nemikHoqsil*. It is illumined by a second sun, shining on it as the sun does on the earth. Far in the east of this upper region are extensive tide-flats. This land above is the home of many supernatural beings, who will be described in due course. The [821] relative position of the sun to this upper world is ill-defined. According to some accounts, it travels by clearly marked trails on the surface, and a transparent dome is postulated to explain how its light reaches this earth. Others state that it moves like a bird or flying canoe through the space between the world and the dome-sky above. On many of these points there is a [598] [424] striking difference of opinion, which the Bella Coola explain by saying that their information is derived from ancient stories, which are personal possessions, and that no one knows the beliefs of his fellows. A co-ordinated theology, as Boas points out, has not evolved among the Bella Coola.

772 773 The sky, as it may be called if the reader will bear in mind that it is the underside of a flat land, was not always in its present condition. The Bella Coola say that long ago the [776] supreme god instructed his Carpenters (I, p. 39) to make a sky. They started from the eastern extremity of the earth, but after a considerable part of the dome had been erected, it fell with a thunderous crash, because no supporting posts had been set up. The part that escaped this calamity is called *Salwaloxam*. Undiscouraged, the Carpenters continued their work with the assistance of posts and so built the sky as it is seen today. Then the supports were taken away.

772 821 As already stated, a sun shines on the land above. As that seen by mortals is attached to the land above, so is this upper

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178 versions of the myth given (vol. I, pp. 313-19) is a case in point.
773 The first was told as a *smaiasta* by a woman who claimed to be a descendant of the people figuring in it; the second, as a story, *sumsma*, by a man. In view of the reliability of both informants, it seems highly probable that this is a story, partly converted to a myth. In other examples there are incidents resembling the supernatural tales given in vol. I, chap. IX, and here too it appears probable that *sumsma* have been assimilated into *smaiasta*. It is complimentary to the truthfulness [577] of the Bella Coola, and to the respect they show for intangible [424] property, that none of the myths recorded were *smaiasta* owned by others. Repeatedly an informant would say that he knew one, but would not tell it since it belonged to some other family.

128 After collecting a few myths, in each of which it was stated
773 that the first settlers at village X were A, B, and C, with their sisters, P and Q, it seemed as if it would have been possible, before the culture of the Bella Coola had fallen into its present decay, to make a census of those whom they believe to have been first settlers of this earth, and that such a list would have had few contradictions. This was soon found to be false. Two myths may give different people as the first occupants of a certain village, nor does such contradiction trouble the Bella Coola. Each man, convinced of the authenticity of his own family account, is quite willing to believe that the one belonging [811] to someone else is equally correct. This characteristic lack of logical consistency has already been mentioned in other connections. Boas (p. 61) likewise gives an instance of uncertainty as to the first occupants of a village, though, on the whole, he found Bella Coola mythology to be more codified than the present writer has done. In view of their lack of systematization in other matters, it would have been surprising if they had evolved a census of their first ancestors, accepted by all as accurate.

Another matter to be considered at this point is the simi- [178] larity of detail in many myths. In part this can be explained

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§ 539 [551] potlatches," at which he validated names for his children. One of these was *Ai qinem*, the designation he had applied to his salmon-weir; it has been used by his descendents as a child's name ever since. As time went on, when his children grew into manhood, he obtained for them seats in the house and also procured wives for them. His eldest son, whose mother was *Soimtsa*, had the names *Ishkemdz-a*, the meaning of which is unknown, and *Ahaclemdz-ais*, "The Most Important of All Chiefs' Sons." *Smanse* had arranged marriages for this young man with four women, but *Ishkemdz-a* was so ugly that only one of his wives, as ugly as himself, would have anything to do with him. His only real friend was a younger brother, *Ahkwa*, aged about twelve years, who was his constant companion.

One day *Ishkemdz-a* became so embittered and disgusted at his own ugliness that he went away, determined never to return, and not caring whither he went. As provisions he carried only a goat bladder filled with goat marrow. This prevents hunger and is said never to become exhausted, no matter how long the hunter may be absent. *Ahkwa* saw his elder brother depart, and decided to accompany him. *Ishkemdz-a* allowed him to come with him for about ten miles, up the valley of the Kimsquit River, where he shot some mergansers which he asked *Ahkwa* to take back as a present to his parents. The younger boy was unwilling, nor could he be dissuaded from following, even when *Ishkemdz-a* told him he was going off to die.

So the two camped for the night, and next morning continued their journey up the valley of the Kimsquit River, a region then unknown. *Ishkemdz-a* was very sad at the thought of the hardships which his younger brother would have to endure, but he could see no way in which to persuade him to return. On and on they pressed, camping at night, their only food being the goat marrow which *Ishkemdz-a* carried. Far up the river they followed an affluent from the left, and from its valley climbed the bare mountain which, though they knew it not, is the watershed between the Kimsquit and Kitlope rivers. Here, above the treeline, they met a wolf. It lowered its ears, hunched, walked a few paces along a path, stopped, and looked back, as if it wished to guide the two wanderers. They decided to follow the animal which, once assured that

[711] "Although the Bella Coola are sufficiently logical to demand an explanation for everything, once a belief has been formulated they cease to inquire whether it is possible. Thus, in all these accounts of the first people, the reader wonders how there were enough people in the world at once after its settlement to make population possible. Who were the ancestors? Who formed the bulk of the guests? Such questions do not strike the Bella Coola as obvious; the stories have been handed down as facts, and they believe that anything was possible in those early days before man had lost his supernatural power.

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The explanation of these manifestations of the supernormal, for such they are considered to be, lies in the conviction that every activity of the mind is due to supernatural causation, the functioning of the spirit. In the round of daily life there are always good and bad incidents; the person who wakes expecting to meet one or other before nightfall recognizes the fulfilment of his premonition in some small occurrence, and narrates it to his fellows as proof of what he had told them in the morning. In case of some major event, such as death or disaster, the Bella Coola assume that some previous indication must have been given. Looking back after the event, a man easily persuades himself that he "felt" a warning, and is more than ever convinced that his spirit, the cause of his thoughts, has supernatural ability.

Conviction in the near presence of the supernatural has had somewhat surprising results with regard to Christian Bella Coola. A man converted in middle life carries all the fervour and realism of the old religion with him to the new, and feels thoroughly familiar with the atmosphere of the Old Testament. Visitations, such as therein described, are similar to those experienced by his fathers and himself, and he scorns the white man who questions their literal accuracy. He continues to hear the voices of supernatural beings, and to interpret mental pictures as visions, but he ascribes them to the beings of the white man's religion. The following is a rather striking illustration of this point:

A number of years ago a devout Christian, who may be designated X, was a patient in the hospital at Bella Bella. In the same ward was a young Bella Bella lad whose sickness refused to yield to treatment. X, becoming interested in his neighbour, began to ponder about his condition, until presently he felt convinced that the sufferer would be better by seven o'clock the following morning, and told him so. A marked improvement was noticeable by the time predicted, but the white doctor foolishly (according to X) gave his patient some

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occupants of the canoe, heard a roaring noise and saw a fish-weir, similar to those used by the Bella Coola, stretching across Burke Channel, which is about a mile and a half wide at this point. They went close to the beach and a brave man cut a passage through the obstacle. A similar trap was once seen stretching across South Bentinck Arm.

An unusual apparition may be regarded as an omen of death. For example, not many years ago a young half-breed saw a motor-boat moored to the bank of North Bentinck Arm with an eagle seated in the stern. He ran his own motor-boat towards it, but as he approached the eagle became a man. Then as he drew still nearer, never taking his eyes off the other boat, it, with its occupant, sank beneath the water, without leaving so much as a ripple. On relating the incident to his father, the latter recognized it as an omen of death. Six months later the half-breed's sister died, thus confirming her father's prognostication.

Supernatural Aid Granted to the Unfortunate

Experiences such as have been cited in the last section are regarded as of possible, and not infrequent occurrence at the present time. On the other hand, supernatural aid granted to those in misfortune, though it is the theme of many stories, is not considered as likely to happen now. The Bella Coola believe the narratives to be chronicles of actual events, and base their conceptions of many supernatural beings on their characteristics as therein described. There is no ceremonial significance attached to any of these stories; they may be, and are told by anyone, frequently for entertainment. Unquestionably, there is a feeling that the moral brought out in such tales is of value in educating the young people, though this point is never emphasized.

Supernatural aid granted to an unfortunate person is termed *ulokwaladjut*. Power so obtained cannot be transmitted by the recipient, although memory of the experience is

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A visitation is not regarded as an inheritable right, but as a tendency; for generations no member of a family may see one of these beasts, but the tradition is preserved, and when one is seen it is recalled that such have been observed by ancestors of the fortunate one. Instances have occurred in which a person has obtained good luck without the tradition of this being in his family, but they are rare. On the other hand, a man may lose the advantage of his possession, even if he own a portion of a *mētqas* or a *naiuit*, through failure to observe ceremonial chastity.

Some of the Bella Coola believe that the *mētqas* and the *naiuit* are the same animal, which can assume these two forms; others that the two are distinct supernatural creatures. In any case the powers and characteristics ascribed to them are the same. Most families have a tradition regarding the appearance of the one or the other to their ancestors, and the information to be derived from them is always about that particular creature. Hence the details here described are probably not all known to any one individual.

The different types of appearances, and the different types of taboos called forth, should be noted. These are due to failure on the part of the Bella Coola to rationalize the sum total of their concepts. Each man recounts what he believes to have happened to one of his ancestors or friends, irrespective of whether or not the methods used may be in direct contradiction to those employed by someone else on another occasion. A man who has heard of the *mētqas*, for example, from his father and mother, may describe contradictory means of dealing with the creature, and in each case may affirm that [illegible] been carried out. Such lack of co-ordination is typical of the Bella Coola.

According to an elderly Kimsquit man, the *mētqas* was brought down in the beginning of time by one of his own ancestors, *Omqemtikla*. It is to this fact that he attributes his own near approach to one on two occasions. As it is fre-